

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy of a personal interview on November 3, 2005.

The above amendments and the following remarks are fully and completely responsive to the Office Action dated August 9, 2005. Claims 1-6 are pending in this application with claims 1, 2 and 6 amended by the present Amendment. In the outstanding Office Action, claims 1-3 and 5-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b); and claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). No new matter has been added. Claims 1-6 are presented for reconsideration.

35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and § 103(a)

Claims 1-3 and 5-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Ogino (JP 10-139401). In making this rejection, the Office Action asserts that this reference teaches each and every element of the claimed invention. Applicants disagree and request reconsideration of this rejection.

Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ogino in view of Fujitani et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,728,483, "Fujitani"). In making this rejection, the Office Action asserts that the combination of these two references teaches and/or suggests the claimed invention. The Office Action also asserts that one of ordinary skill in the art would combine these two references. Applicants disagree and request reconsideration of this rejection.

Independent claim 1 (the only independent claim in the present application), as amended, recites in part:

...a first storage means for storing and supplying the hydrogen gas obtained by said reforming means to a first fuel cell used as a stationary electric power supply;

a first supply line supplying the hydrogen gas from the reforming means to the first storage means;

a second storage means for storing and supplying the hydrogen gas obtained by said reforming means to a second fuel cell used as a mobile electric power supply;

a second supply line supplying the hydrogen gas from the reforming means to the second storage means; and

a pressurization means, provided in the second supply line, for pressurizing the hydrogen gas to be stored by the second storage means,...

In rejecting claims 1-3 and 5-6, the Office Action, on page 2, states that Ogino teaches "a first storage means (92) for storing and supplying hydrogen gas from said reforming means to at least a first fuel cell (100)". The Office Action also states that Ogino teaches "a second storage means (55) for storing and supplying the hydrogen gas obtained by said reforming means to at least a second fuel cell (100)".

As discussed in the interview, Ogino teaches a refining machine (reforming means) 30 that generates hydrogen gas from the gas supplied at the gas supply inlet 11. The hydrogen gas generated in the refining machine 30 is purified in the hydrogen purification machine 40. Compressor 50 then pressurizes the hydrogen gas prior to it being stored in accumulator 55. On demand, hydrogen is transferred from accumulator 55 through hydrogen passage connections 76 and 116 to fuel tank 92. Thereafter, hydrogen gas is provided from fuel tank 92 to fuel cell 100.

Therefore, Ogino teaches a system whereby the hydrogen gas created in refining machine 30 is initially compressed and stored in accumulator 55. Thereafter, the

hydrogen gas flows from accumulator 55 to fuel tank 92 before being delivered to the fuel cell 100.

As also discussed in the interview, the present invention provides two supply lines from a single hydrogen reformer to two different storage devices. The first storage device then supplies the hydrogen gas stored therein to a first fuel cell. Similarly, the second storage device provides the hydrogen gas stored therein to a second fuel cell. The first and second fuel cells are independent.

As further discussed in the interview, Ogino fails to teach and/or suggest a first storage means connected to the reforming means with a first supply line and a second storage means connected to the reforming means with a second supply line.

Fujitani is neither cited for, nor does Fujitani correct, the deficiencies discussed above in Ogino. Consequently, Ogino alone, or in combination with Fujitani, fails to teach and/or suggest the claimed invention. Specifically, neither of these references teaches and/or suggests first and second storage means, each connected to the reformer by first and second supply lines, respectively. Similarly, neither of these references teach and/or suggest first and second storage means that each supply an independent fuel cell (i.e., first and second fuel cells). Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-3 and 5-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). Applicants also request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Conclusion

Applicants' amendments and remarks have overcome the rejections set forth in the Office Action dated August 9, 2005. Specifically, Applicants' remarks have distinguished claims 1-3 and 5-6 from Ogino and thus overcome the rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). Applicants' remarks have also distinguished claim 4 from the combination of Ogino and Fujitani and thus overcome the rejection of this claim under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Accordingly, claims 1-6 are in condition for allowance. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-6.

Applicants submit that the application is now in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes the application is not in condition for allowance, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney by telephone if it is believed that such contact will expedite the prosecution of the application.

In the event that this paper is not considered to be timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge payment for any additional fees which may be required with respect to this paper to our Deposit Account No. 01-2300, making reference to attorney docket number 101175-00035.

Respectfully submitted,
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